

New website launched to help Delawareans locate parks

Dover –In an effort to encourage more children and their families to enjoy the outdoors and outdoor-related activity year-round, Delaware State Parks has launched “Play Outside,” a new website for Delaware residents and visitors that provides convenient and detailed information about public parks and facilities in Delaware.

Residents and visitors can now find nearby public outdoor recreation areas including municipal, county and state park lands or recreational facilities such as playgrounds, ball fields, fishing piers, trails, parking and even restrooms, using an interactive online web map. The site is mobile device- friendly and can also track users’ current locations to help them navigate along the many miles of trails that Delaware has to offer.

“We are very excited about ‘Play Outside,’” said Ray Bivens, director of DNREC’s Division of Parks & Recreation. “It fits perfectly with the mission of the Delaware Children in Nature Initiative by promoting healthy lifestyles, providing better access to green space and creating opportunities for families to get outdoors. This is an amazing resource for all Delawareans.”

Play Outside is a single online information source that allows users to find public parks as well as exact locations of outdoor recreation facilities within parks and wildlife areas throughout the state. It includes all areas in the public trust managed by towns, cities, counties and state agencies in Delaware. The website is designed to serve those looking for outdoor recreation opportunities, places to be immersed in nature or to conduct active lifestyles. Users can locate parks close to home or in less-developed places such as wildlife

areas.

“The public can find a softball field or playground near home, 10 miles away, or in a nearby town or county,” Bivens said. “Children and their families can find the location of all trails in Delaware, or navigate to fishing spots statewide. These are just a few of the powerful functions this web tool offers its users.”

During a ceremony today to launch the new website, Nemours Children’s Health System, a key partner in the fight against childhood obesity, praised the effort. “Nemours and Delaware State Parks have enjoyed a long-standing partnership focused on getting kids active in the outdoors,” said Dr. George Datto, the division chief of Weight Management at Nemours/Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children. “Encouraging kids to be active and instilling this healthy habit early is so important because of all of the health benefits physical activity offers: maintenance of a healthy weight, avoidance of chronic diseases and better mental health to name a few,” Datto added. “Delaware State Parks’ Play Outside website is a wonderful resource for Delaware families that is going to make it a lot easier for parents and caregivers to identify nearby parks and trails where they can go with their kids to enjoy quality time and be active together.”

Play Outside was developed in partnership with DNREC, the Division of Parks & Recreation and the Delaware Department of Technology and Information. Geographic Information System (GIS) software, aerial photography and an Outdoor Recreation Inventory are combined to deliver park and outdoor activity information on the new website, which includes a variety of search functions.

Information on new facilities is regularly added to a database – the Outdoor Recreation Inventory (ORI). The ORI and Play Outside websites are maintained by these state agencies.

Find the Play Outside website at de.gov/playoutside.

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